



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/662,294	09/16/2003	Tadashi Amada	02887.0249	4299
22852	7590	09/10/2007		
FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW, GARRETT & DUNNER LLP 901 NEW YORK AVENUE, NW WASHINGTON, DC 20001-4413			EXAMINER LAO, LUN S	
			ART UNIT 2615	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 09/10/2007	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/662,294

Applicant(s)

AMADA ET AL.

Examiner

Lun-See Lao

Art Unit

2615

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 June 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Art Unit: 2615

DETAILED ACTION

Introduction

1. This action is in response to the amendments filed on 06-11-2007. Claims 13 and 20 have been amended. Claims 1-20 are pending.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1-5 and 7-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Nagai et al., "ESTIMATION OF SOURCE LOCATION BASED ON 2-D MUSIC AND ITS APPLICATION TO SPEECH RECOGNITION IN CARS," (hereafter as Nagai).

4. Regarding Claim 1, Nagai discloses a directional setting apparatus, comprising:
a voice recognition unit (see fig.1) which detects a certain voice included in a sound signal outputted from a microphone array having a plurality of microphones and a directional determination period indicating a detection period of said certain voice (Figs. 1 and 4; pages 3041 and 3043);

a voice direction detector (HE-2D MUSIC in fig.1) which detects occurrence direction of said certain voice in said directional determination period (Figs. 1-2 and 4; pages 3041-3043); and

a directional controller (Speech Recognition in fig.1) which controls directivity of a prescribed apparatus based on the sound signals inputted from said plurality of microphones in said directional determination period (Figs. 1--5; pages 3041-3043).

5. Regarding Claim 2, Nagai discloses said directional controller controls the directivity of said prescribed apparatus, based on the sound signal which is generated by delaying the sound signals outputted from said plurality of microphones in said directional determination period with locations of said microphones and the amount of delay based on the direction of arrival of the sound signals and adding the sound signals to each other (Figs. 1-2 and 4; pages 3041-3043).

6. Regarding Claim 3, Nagai discloses a detection result storage which stores directional data indicating occurrence direction of said certain voice detected by said voice direction detector, wherein said directional controller controls directivity of said certain apparatus based on the directional data of said certain voice in said directional determination period, among the directional data stored in said detection result storage (Figs. 1-2 and 4; pages 3041-3043).

7. Regarding Claim 4, Nagai discloses a sound storage which stores said sound signal, wherein said directional controller controls directivity of said prescribed apparatus based on said sound signals in said directional determination period, among the sound signal stored in said detection result storage (Figs. 1-2 and 4; pages 3041-3043).

8. Regarding Claim 5, Nagai discloses said prescribed apparatus is said microphone array; and said directional controller controls the directivity of said microphone array

based on the detection result of said voice direction detector (Figs. 1- 2 and 4; pages 3041-3043).

9. Regarding Claim 7, Nagai discloses said voice recognition unit detects said certain voice included in the sound signal outputted from a prescribed microphone among said plurality of microphones (Figs. 1 and 4; pages 3041 and 3043).

10. Regarding Claim 8, Nagai discloses wherein said voice recognition unit detects said certain voice included in the output of said directional controller (Figs. 1 and 4; pages 3041 and 3043).

11. Regarding Claim 9, Nagai discloses said voice direction detector detects occurrence direction of said certain direction based on a result of repeating the detection of occurrence direction of said certain voice by a plurality of times (Figs. 1 and 4; pages 3041 and 3043).

12. Regarding Claim 10, Nagai discloses said directional determination period is a partial period in detection period of said certain voice (Figs. 1-2 and 4; pages 3041-3043).

13. Regarding Claim 11, Nagai discloses said directional determination period is a period within a detection period of said certain voice and in which voice level of said certain voice is not less than a prescribed level (Figs. 1-2 and 4; pages 3041-3043).

14. Regarding Claim 12, Nagai discloses said directional controller can individually control the directivities of said plurality of microphone, respectively (Figs. 1-2 and 4; pages 3041-3043).

15. Regarding Claim 13, Nagai discloses said directional controller supplies a sound signal obtained by combining the sound signals outputted from said plurality of microphones to said voice recognition unit without control of the directivity, when said voice recognition unit detects said certain voice at first time, and controls the directivity of the sound signals outputted from said plurality of microphones based on the prior detection result by said voice recognition unit to supply the sound signal to said voice recognition unit, when said voice recognition unit detects said certain voice at second or more times (Figs. 1-2 and 4; pages 3041-3043).

16. Regarding Claim 14, Nagai discloses said voice recognition unit detects multiple types of said certain voices and a plurality of said directional determination periods corresponding to these certain voices; and said directional controller independently controls the directivity of said prescribed apparatus based on the sound signal outputted from said plurality of microphones in said plurality of directional determination period (Figs. 1-2 and 4; pages 3041-3043).

17. Regarding Claim 15, Nagai discloses said voice recognition unit detects a voice indicating a setting of a certain directivity and a voice indicating a setting release of said certain directivity; and said directivity controller suspends the directional control of said prescribed apparatus when said voice recognition unit detects the voice which indicates setting release of said certain directivity (Figs. 1-2 and 4; pages 3041-3043).

18. Regarding Claim 16, Nagai discloses said directional controller releases setting of said certain directivity, and controls directivity of said prescribed apparatus based on the detection result of a new certain voice when said voice direction detector detects

Art Unit: 2615

occurrence direction of the new certain voice, before said voice direction detector detects the voice indicating the setting release of said certain directivity (Figs. 1-2 and 4; pages 3041-3043).

19. Regarding Claim 17, Nagai discloses said certain voice is a voice including a meaningful certain keyword (i.e. Applicant has not clearly defined meaningful certain keyword in the claim, which the examiner can interpret this limitation in any manner consistent with the limitation, such as voice or speech) (Figs. 1-2 and 4; pages 3041-3043).

20. Regarding Claim 18, Nagai discloses a directional setting system, comprising:
a microphone array having a plurality of microphones (Figs. 1-2 and 4; pages 304.1-3043);

a voice recognition unit (see fig.1) which detects a certain voice included in a sound signal outputted from said microphone array and a directional determination period indicating a detection period of said certain voice (Figs. 1 and 4; pages 3041 and 3043);

a voice direction detector (HE-2D MUSIC in fig.1) which detects occurrence direction of said certain voice in said directional determination period (Figs. 1-2 and 4; pages 3041-3043); and

a directivity controller (Speech Recognition in fig.1) which controls directivity of a prescribed apparatus based on sound signals outputted from said plurality of microphones in said directional determination period (Figs. 1-2 and 4; pages 3041-3043).

Art Unit: 2615

21. Claim 19 is essentially similar to Claim 18 and is rejected for the reasons stated above apropos to Claim 18.

22. Claim 20 is essentially similar to Claim 19 and is rejected for the reasons stated above apropos to Claim 19.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

23. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

24. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nagai et al., "ESTIMATION OF SOURCE LOCATION BASED ON 2-D MUSIC AND ITS APPLICATION TO SPEECH RECOGNITION IN CARS," in view of USPAPN 20020001389 to Amiri et al. (hereafter as Amiri).

25. Regarding Claim 6, Nagai does not expressly disclose said prescribed apparatus is a image pick-up device; and said directional controller controls image pick-up direction of said image pick-up device based on the detection result of said voice direction detector.

However, Amiri discloses an apparatus for locating a talker, in which a position estimate is used by a steering device, wherein the steering device is a image tracking algorithm to track the image of the sound source (abstract; Fig. 1; page 2, paragraphs 0018-0019).

Art Unit: 2615

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Nagai with the teaching of Amiri to have a position estimate is used by a steering device, wherein the steering device is a image tracking algorithm to track the image of the sound source (i.e. said prescribed apparatus is a image pick-up device; and said directional controller controls image pick-up direction of said image pick-up device based on the detection result of said voice direction detector).

Response to Arguments

26. Applicant's arguments filed 06-11-2007 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argued that Nagai does not teach "a voice direction detector which detects occurrence direction of said certain voice in said directional determination period" and "a directional controller which controls directivity of a prescribed apparatus based on the sound signals inputted from said plurality of microphones in said directional determination period" as recited in claim 1 (see the remarks page 10 last paragraph).

The examiner respectfully disagrees. Nagai discloses a voice direction detector (HE-2D MUSIC in fig.1) which detects occurrence direction of said certain voice in said directional determination period (Figs. 1-2 and 4; pages 3041-3043); and

Art Unit: 2615

a directional controller (Speech Recognition in fig.1) which controls directivity of a prescribed apparatus based on the sound signals inputted from said plurality of microphones in said directional determination period (Figs. 1-5; pages 3041-3043).

Applicant further argued that Nagai does not teach "a voice direction detector which detects occurrence direction of said certain voice in said directional determination period," as recited in claim 1 (see remarks page 11).

The examiner disagrees. Nagai discloses a voice direction detector (HE-2D MUSIC in fig.1) which detects occurrence direction of said certain voice in said directional determination period (Figs. 1-2 and 4; pages 3041-3043).

Applicant further argued that Nagai does not teach use collected sounds to control directivity of an apparatus (see the remarks page 11, first paragraph). The examiner's response is that the argued "use collected sounds to control directivity of an apparatus" is not claimed, and thus moot.

Applicants further argued the rejection of claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nagai in view of Amiri because a prima facie case of obviousness has not been established. To establish a prima facie case of obviousness, the prior art (taken separately or in combination) must teach or suggest all of the claim elements. See MPEP § 2142, 8th Ed., Rev. 5 (August 2006). Moreover, "in formulating a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based upon a combination of prior art elements, it remains necessary to identify the reason why a person of ordinary skill in the art would have combined the prior art elements in the manner claimed." USPTO Memorandum from Margaret A. Focarino, Deputy Commissioner for Patent Operations, May 3, 2007, page

Art Unit: 2615

2. In this application, a prima facie case of obviousness has not been established for at least the reason that the applied prior art fails to teach or suggest each and every element of the claim (see remarks page 12, 2nd paragraph).

In response to applicant's argument that there is no suggestion to combine the references, the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, Nagai and Amiri both teach the voice recognition system. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Nagai with the teaching of Amiri to have a position estimate is used by a steering device, wherein the steering device is a image tracking algorithm to track the image of the sound source (i.e. said prescribed apparatus is a image pick-up device; and said directional controller controls image pick\ - up direction of said image pick-up device based on the detection result of said voice direction detector).

Conclusion

27. THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

Art Unit: 2615

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

28. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Schaaf (US PAT. 6,748,088) is recited to show how other related directional setting apparatus, directional setting system, directional setting method and directional setting program.

29. Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Mail Stop ____ (explanation, e.g., Amendment or After-final, etc.)

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Facsimile responses should be faxed to:
(571) 273-8300

Hand-delivered responses should be brought to:
Customer Service Window
Randolph Building
401 Dulany Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner


Art Unit: 2615

should be directed to Lao,Lun-See whose telephone number is (571) 272-7501 The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8:00 to 5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Vivian Chin, can be reached on (571) 272-7848.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Technology Center 2600 whose telephone number is (571) 272-2600.

Lao,Lun-See *L.S.*
Patent Examiner
US Patent and Trademark Office
Knox
571-272-7501
Date 08-24-2007


VIVIAN CHIN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2600